



## MEMORANDUM

To: Task Force on the Future for Growth & Development

From: Rich Hall, Secretary, Maryland Department of Planning

Subject: Task Force Recommendations (MDP's Responsibilities)

Date: December 2, 2009

The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) is responsible for the following recommendations per the Task Force's December 2008 Report- R-3, R-4, R-19 and R-29. The following is a status of MDP's work to-date on these recommendations.

- ***MDP, in coordination with each local government, should adopt a policy for meeting early in the comprehensive plan development process to coordinate and collaborate about the jurisdiction's comprehensive plan, and to facilitate local consideration and potential incorporation of State comments into the plan before its adoption. Adoption of State comments would remain in the discretion of the local government. (R-3)***

The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) offers three levels of early comprehensive plan consultation:

### Early Comprehensive Plan Consultation

#### 1) Participation in early plan development

This often takes the form of providing MDP Models and Guidelines, examples from other jurisdictions or research from the American Planning Association. Assistance can also involve meeting with local elected and appointed officials and Staff to further educate them on State plan requirements or assisting in setting up community involvement processes. This type of assistance is informal and does not involve written comments or data analysis and usually comes from the regional planner for the jurisdiction.

#### 2) Analysis support

This could take the form of capacity, build out analyses or land use/land cover analysis. This is generally technical in nature and is supported by the MDP Land Use Analysis division working with regional planning staff.

#### 3) Preliminary Plan review

MDP can offer "pre-draft" comprehensive plan review and comments. This is similar in content to our formal "60 day review" but does not involve the clearinghouse function and does not include review by other State agencies unless specifically requested. Regional planners coordinate these reviews as they do for the draft reviews.

#### Review of Draft Comprehensive Plans

The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) currently reviews and comments on draft local Comprehensive Plans. To better assist local governments in their efforts to comply with the provisions of HB 1141, MDP will determine whether the required WRE/MGE meets the statutory provision of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

#### Review of Adopted Comprehensive plans

Beginning in May 2009, The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) began conducting final reviews of adopted local Comprehensive Plans. A draft policy has been developed for internal review. This review be simplified and will exclusively address whether the required WRE/MGE elements comply with the provisions of HB 1141.

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- ***The State should identify additional resources for providing technical and/or financial assistance to local governments for development and implementation of their comprehensive plans. Existing non-profit and university resources should be examined as potentially efficient ways to provide such assistance. Currently, some counties are providing planning assistance to their municipalities, and such voluntary planning collaboration should be encouraged. (R-4)***

#### Proposed Organizational Framework:

The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP), in its coordination role, will work with State Agencies, non-governmental organizations and Universities to identify technical and financial resources for the development and implementation of local comprehensive plans. This information will be disseminated through a variety of means including but not limited to the Planning Directors Roundtable, the MDP website, the RedBook, attendance at conferences, local meetings, e-announcements and of course, partner organizations.

As a means to create better coordination, synergism and collaboration between the various technical and financial partners, MDP will convene coordination meetings that will take place in the different regions of Maryland prior to the State Development Plan meetings. An alternative, or in addition to this effort, MDP will host a statewide workshop in early summer of 2010 to develop a better coordination of these resources.

MDP has begun working with targeted partners at the federal level to promote sustainable communities. One of the future benefits *may* be grant money that could be used for planning purposes.

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- ***MDP, in conjunction with other State agencies, local governments, and the Task Force, should develop and implement changes to the 2004 survey format to maximize its usefulness for the purposes described. Local governments should participate fully in completing the survey, whose utility will be compromised if data is incomplete. (R-19)***

The full time position dedicated to this effort was eliminated during the previous administration. The loss of this position greatly impacts MDP's ability to implement this recommendation. Given our lean staff resources and greater work load which includes HB1141 implementation, MDP is not in a position to dedicate existing personnel to this effort.

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- ***MDP should prepare a study on the practicality of building vertical "urban" schools in the more densely built areas of PFAs. The study should also consider the practicality of making schools part of a mixed use or transit oriented development project and co-location of public facilities. (R-29)***

Please refer to the Vertical Schools Report issued to the Task Force.

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In addition to staffing the Task Force on the Future for Growth and Development in Maryland, MDP is working on many other initiatives. Some of these are:

- Potential for the Task Force being extended.
- Considering the Historic Tax Credit reauthorization.
- PlanMaryland
- Growth Print
- Online training course for Planning Commissioners and Boards of Appeals.
- Census 2010